



Joy of the Game Baseball & Softball Academy

1455 Busch Parkway • Buffalo Grove, IL 60089 • 847-850-5691

1160 Allanson Road • Mundelein, IL 60060 • 847-388-3545

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LZBSA Softball Coaches Clinic March 1st and March 8th, 2009

Part 1 – Hitting

HITTING DRILLS

PROGRESSION DRILL:

HAVE THE PLAYER IN THE PROPER BATTING STANCE. BREAK THE SWING INTO FOUR EASY TO REPEAT STEPS. STEP 1; HAVE THEM MOVE THEIR STRIDE FOOT ONLY A FEW INCHES. STEP 2; PIVOT THE BACK FOOT SO THAT THE HEEL IS POINTING TO THE SKY AND THE BACK LEG IS SLIGHTLY BENT. FRONT LEG IS STRAIGHT AND SOLID. STEP 3; ROTATE THE HIPS INTO THE HITTING ZONE AS FAR AS POSSIBLE HOLDING THEIR SHOULDERS BACK. STEP 4; RELEASE THE SHOULDERS, SWINGING THE ARMS THROUGH THE HITTING ZONE, COMPLETING THE SWING.

COACH PITCH:

FOR BATTING PRACTICE, HAVE THE COACH THAT CAN THROW THE MOST CONSISTANT STRIKES THROW BATTING PRACTICE. GIVE EACH PLAYER 10-12 SWINGS. FOR THE AGE LEVELS THAT ALLOW BUNTING, HAVE THE PLAYERS MAKE 5 BUNT ATTEMPTS BEFORE TAKING 10-12 SWINGS. IF THE PLAYERS MISS THE BALL, HAVE THEM TELL YOU WHERE THE BALL WAS. DID THE BALL GO OVER THEIR BAT OR UNDER THEIR BAT? IF THEY CANNOT TELL YOU, TALK TO THEM ABOUT TRYING TO TRACK THE BALL FROM YOUR HAND TO THEIR BAT.

FENCE DRILL:

STAND YOUR PLAYER FACING A FENCE WITH THE PLAYER JUST FAR ENOUGH FROM THE FENCE TO PUT THE BAT BETWEEN THEIR STOMACH AND THE FENCE. HAVE THE PLAYER SWING THE BAT WITH A FULL SWING TO AVOID THE BAT HITTING THE FENCE. MAKE SURE TO HAVE THE PLAYER STEP DIRECTLY TOWARDS THE PITCHER. THIS FORCES THE PLAYER TO SWING WITH THEIR HANDS CLOSE TO THEIR BODY FOR MAXIMUM POWER.

PALM UP/PALM DOWN DRILL:

PLACE A BALL ON A TEE JUST IN FRONT OF HOME PLATE. HAVE THE PLAYER IN THE BATTER'S POSITION HOLDING A BALL IN BOTH HANDS WITH FINGERS EXTENDED NEAR THEIR RIGHT SHOULDER. HAVE THEM "SWING" THE BALL THEY ARE HOLDING, RELEASING IT SO AS TO HIT THE BALL OFF THE TEE. FOR ADVANCED LEVEL OF THIS DRILL DO THE SAME DRILL, BUT HAVE THE PLAYER HIT A BALL THAT IS SOFT TOSSED BY THE COACH TO THEM, HITTING IT OUT OF MID-AIR.

TEE DRILLS:

HAVE EACH PLAYER TAKE 3-5 SWINGS WITH THE BALL ON THE TEE SET UP INSIDE; 3-5 SWINGS WITH THE BALL ON THE OUTSIDE.

*HAVE A COACH SET UP THE TEE AND WORK WITH THE PLAYER TO EXPLAIN HOW THEY SHOULD TAKE THEIR HANDS TO EACH LOCATION. *WORK ON CORRECT STANCE, LINEAR AND ROTATIONAL MOVEMENT, CONTACT ZONE, AND FINISH



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SOFT TOSS: COACHES TO TOSS WHIFFLE BALLS OR REGULAR BALLS, WORK ON TOSSING THE BALL TO HELP THE PLAYERS SUCCEED WITH CONTACT FOR EACH TOSS. TOSS BALL IN FRONT TO ENCOURAGE MAKING CONTACT IN FRONT OF PLATE.

AS THE PLAYERS IMPROVE, TOSS 2 BALLS AT THE SAME TIME, AND RIGHT AS THE COACH TOSSES THE BALLS IN THE AIR THEY WOULD CALL TOP OR BOTTOM, AND THE PLAYER WOULD HAVE TO TRY TO HIT THE BALL THE COACH CALLS.

COACH CAN START WITH 1 BALL IN EACH HAND, MOVING THEIR HANDS UP AND DOWN SLIGHTLY, THEN TOSSING ONE OF THE BALLS UP TO HELP THE PLAYERS IMPROVE THEIR REACTION TIME AND BAT SPEED.

PEPPER DRILL:

HAVE 1 PLAYER WITH A BAT, BUNT TO 2-4 PLAYERS ABOUT 10-15' IN FRONT OF THEM TO FIELD ALL BUNTS. THESE PLAYERS SHOULD MAKE UP A LINE FROM DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF THE BATTER, AND EQUAL DISTANCES FROM THE BUNTER'S RIGHT AND LEFT. USE 1 BALL AND HAVE ONE OF THE FIELDING PLAYERS TOSS THE BALL TO ALLOW THE BUNTER TO WORK ON A PUSH BUNT TOWARD THE PLAYERS. THE PLAYER THAT FIELDS THE BUNT WILL THEN TOSS IT TO THE BUNTER AGAIN. HAVE EACH PLAYER TAKE APPROX. 10 BUNTS THEN ROTATE PLAYERS UNTIL EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE TO BUNT. THE FIELDING PLAYERS WORK ON READY POSITION, THEY SHOULD CALL EVERY BALL THAT IS BUNTED TO THEM. THE BUNTER SHOULD WORK ON TRYING TO BUNT A BALL TO EACH PLAYER TO SIMULATE BUNTING FROM THE 1ST BASE LINE TO THE 3RD BASE LINE.

BALANCE BEAM SWING:

HITTER PERFORMS SWINGS WHILE STANDING ON A 4'X 6' (BALANCE BEAM) PIECE OF WOOD. HITTER MUST STAY ON THE WOOD WHILE MAKING FULL SWING. HITTER SHOULD STAY BALANCED THE ENTIRE SWING.

TENNIS RACQUET DRILL:

HITTER HOLDS A TENNIS RACQUET WITH BOTH HANDS AT THE CONTACT POINT OF THE BALL (PALM UP/PALM DOWN), THEN HAVE THEM TAKE 5 SWINGS WITH JUST THEIR BOTTOM HAND ON THE RACQUET, THEN 5 SWINGS WITH JUST THEIR TOP HAND ON THE RACQUET. THE HITTER NOW SWINGS AT TENNIS BALLS SOFT TOSSED AT THE HITTER. IF THE HITTER HAS CORRECT PALM POSITIONING, THEY WILL HIT A LINE DRIVE INTO A FENCE. IF THEY ROLL THEIR HANDS, THEY WILL HIT BOUNCERS INTO THE GROUND.

BUCKET DRILL:

COACH WILL STAND ON A BUCKET WITH THEIR ARM STRAIGHT OUT, THEY WILL DROP A BALL TO THE PLAYER WHO HAS TO REACT QUICKLY TO HIT THE BALL. *MAKE SURE THE COACH IS OUT OF THE REACH OF THE BATTER. THE BATTER SHOULD BE IN THE BATTERS BOX AT HOME PLATE OR THEY SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO SIMULATE HOME PLATE. THIS DRILL IS USED TO HELP THE PLAYERS IMPROVE THEIR REACTION TIME AND BAT SPEED.



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Part 2 – Baserunning

BASERUNNING DRILLS

RUNNING THROUGH FIRST BASE:

HAVE THE PLAYERS LINE UP AT HOME PLATE, HAVE EACH PLAYER RUN FROM HOME TO FIRST MAKING SURE THAT THEY DO NOT START TO SLOW DOWN UNTIL THEY ARE 5 STEPS PAST FIRST BASE. SET CONES, HELMETS OR SOME OTHER VISUAL AIDE PAST THE BASE AND HAVE THEM RUN PAST THIS MARK.

ROUNDING A BASE / LISTENING TO YOUR COACH:

HAVE HALF THE PLAYERS LINE UP AT HOME PLATE AND HALF THE PLAYERS LINE UP AT SECOND BASE. HAVE A FIRST AND THIRD BASE COACH SET UP. HAVE A COACH YELL HIT AND HAVE THE FIRST PLAYER IN EACH LINE RUN. THE PLAYER RUNNING FROM HOME WOULD LISTEN TO THE FIRST BASE COACH TO SEE IF THEY SHOULD RUN TO SECOND, OR JUST MAKE THE TURN. THE PLAYER ON SECOND BASE WOULD LISTEN TO THE COACH AT THIRD BASE TO SEE IF THEY SHOULD STOP AT 3RD OR KEEP RUNNING TO HOME. HAVE ALL PLAYERS START FROM BOTH HOME AND SECOND BEFORE ENDING THIS DRILL.

ROUNDING THE BASES:

HAVE THE PLAYERS LINE UP AT HOME PLATE, HAVE EACH PLAYER RUN FROM HOME TO HOME. MAKE SURE THAT THEY TOUCH THE INSIDE CORNER OF EVERY BASE. THEY SHOULD TRY TO RUN THE TIGHTEST CIRCLE THEY CAN AROUND THE BASES. USE CONES OR MARKINGS TO SHOW THEM THE CORRECT PATH FOR ROUNDING 1ST BASE TO GET THEM STARTED CORRECTLY.

DIAMOND DRILL:

HAVE HALF THE PLAYERS LINE UP AT 3RD BASE AND HALF THE PLAYERS LINE UP AT 1ST BASE. THIS IS GOING TO BE A RELAY RACE. THE COACH WILL YELL GO TO GET THE RELAY STARTED. THE PLAYERS HAVE TO RUN ALL THE WAY AROUND THE BASES. ALL OTHER PLAYERS HAVE TO STAY BACK OUT OF THE WAY OF THE RUNNERS. WHEN THE FIRST RUNNER FROM EACH TEAM GETS BACK TO THEIR STARTING BASE, THE NEXT RUNNER ON THEIR TEAM WOULD GET TO START RUNNING THEIR LAP AROUND THE BASES. THE FIRST TEAM TO HAVE EVERY PLAYER RUN AROUND THE BASES WINS. IF THEY HAVE AN UNEVEN NUMBER OF PLAYERS, HAVE ONE PLAYER RUN TWICE TO EVEN IT OUT. SEPARATE PLAYERS TO MAKE TEAMS AS EVEN AS POSSIBLE, BASED ON SPEED.

LEAD OFFS:

SPLIT THE TEAM INTO EVEN GROUPS TO HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF PLAYERS AT 1ST BASE, 2ND BASE, AND 3RD BASE. HAVE ONE PLAYER FROM EACH GROUP START ON THEIR BASE. HAVE EACH PLAYER TAKE THEIR LEADOFF DEPENDING ON THE RULES FOR THEIR AGE GROUP. SEE HOW BIG A LEADOFF THEY CAN GET BEFORE GETTING PICKED OFF. HAVE THE COACHES BE THE PITCHERS AND CATCHERS FOR THE YOUNGER AGE LEVELS AND HAVE THE PLAYERS PITCH AND CATCH FOR THE OLDER AGE LEVELS. *MAKE SURE ALL OF THE PLAYERS HAVE HELMETS ON, IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH HELMETS FOR EVERYONE, JUST HAVE THE PLAYERS STAY BACK TOWARD THE OUTFIELD OR IN THE CLOSEST DUGOUT TO ELIMINATE ANY CHANCE FOR INJURY. MAKE SURE THEY ARE WATCHING AT ALL TIMES TO LEARN FROM THEIR TEAMMATES.



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TIMING FOR LEAD OFFS:

IN A STRAIGHT LINE, PUT DOWN THREE OR FOUR BASES ABOUT 5' APART FROM EACH OTHER. HAVE ONE PLAYER AT EACH BASE. SET UP A VIDEO CAMERA SO THAT YOU CAN VIDEO ALL FOUR PLAYERS AT THE SAME TIME. HAVE A PITCHING RUBBER, AND A PITCHER APPROX. 25' IN FRONT OF THE RUNNERS. TELL THE PLAYERS THEY SHOULD GET THE BEST/QUICKEST LEADOFF POSSIBLE ON EVERY PITCH. MAKE SURE YOU GET THE PITCHER IN THE VIDEO, AND AS MUCH OF THE PITCHING LANE TO THE CATCHER AS POSSIBLE, TO SHOW JUST HOW CLOSE THE BALL MAY BE TO THE CATCHER BEFORE THEY START THEIR LEADOFF. SEE WHAT STYLE OF LEADOFF WORKS BEST FOR YOUR TEAM, STANDARD LEADOFF FROM THE FRONT OF THE BASE, ROCKER START FROM THE FRONT OF THE BASE, OR ROCKER START FROM THE SIDE OF THE BASE. VIDEO AT LEAST 3 STARTS FROM EACH STYLE LEADOFF. THEN SHOW THE VIDEO TO ALL OF YOUR PLAYERS. HAVE YOUR PITCHER START HER WIND-UP, AND THROW TO YOUR CATCHER FOR THIS DRILL, (YOUR CATCHER SHOULD BE IN FULL EQUIPMENT.) YOU CAN WORK WITH YOUR PITCHER HITTING A SERIES OF PITCH LOCATIONS DURING THIS DRILL, AND YOUR CATCHER CAN WORK ON FRAMING DURING THIS SAME DRILL)

SLIDING:

SLIDING POSITION HAS ONE LEG EXTENDED WITH OTHER LEG TUCKED UNDER EXTENDED KNEE FORMING A "FIGURE 4". HAVE ONE COACH UNDER EACH ARM, RUNNING WITH PLAYER. AS PLAYER EXTENDS LEG AND TUCKS OTHER LEG (ANKLE BEHIND KNEE), COACHES SLOWLY RELEASE PLAYER'S ARMS AND LET PLAYER SLIDE ON THEIR OWN. HANDS UP TOWARD THE SKY (LEANING BACK). THIS CAN BE DONE ON THE GRASS FIRST (WET IF POSSIBLE). COACHES SHOULD CONTINUE ASSISTING PLAYERS UNTIL PLAYER IS CONFIDENT AND THEY ARE ABLE TO TRY IT ON THEIR OWN. MAKE TIME FOR SLIDING AT EACH PRACTICE TO BEST AVOID INJURY AND KEEP CONFIDENCE LEVEL UP. THIS IS A GREAT PRACTICE TO HAVE WHEN IT IS WET AND THE PLAYERS CAN PRACTICE ON THE WET GRASS WITHOUT FEAR OF GETTING HURT. *MAKE SURE YOU TELL THE PARENTS TO BRING PLASTIC FOR THEIR CAR WHEN THEY PICK UP THEIR KIDS AFTER A RAINY DAY SLIDING PRACTICE, OR THEY WILL NOT BE HAPPY WITH YOU.

Part 3 – PITCHING

Grip: Hold ball finger tips on "C" laces with thumb underneath middle finger thumb pointing to catcher

Feet: Inside of feet should be shoulder width apart. In first 5 stations feet should have little or no movement in set position

Clock Work Stations:

1. **Wrist snap:** Stand side ways in front of home plate, toes in straight line with point of home plate with toes at 30 degree angle (all stations require this), arm at the 6 o'clock position, cock your wrist and snap ball into catchers mitt with 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock rotation. (Only your wrist should move.)
2. **Take 4 steps, back.** Set up toes, bend back knee slightly bring head over back knee and hip over back heel (90% of your weight on your back leg. This should be position at every station) raise throwing arm to the 20 minute slot on a clock and cock your wrist, keep arm in front of body (even with toes), snap ball to catcher with 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock rotation. Release ball at 6 o'clock position.



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3. Take 4 steps back, set toes and head in proper position, bring pitching arm to the 3 o'clock position on a clock, and your front arm to the 9 o'clock position on a clock. Keep your head back, using only arms to make a scissors motion pulling catcher's head to you with your glove hand, snap ball to catcher with 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock rotation, keeping your head over your back knee at all times, with your pitching arm extended like you are shaking hands with someone in front of you, and finishing with a relaxed arm and your elbow pointed at the catcher. Release ball at 6 o'clock position.
4. Take 4 steps back, set toes, head, and hip. Take pitching arm and bring it up to the 12 position on a clock, turn your wrist so the back of your hand faces you, your glove hand is at the 3 o'clock position on a clock, keeping your head over your knee and hip over heel. Throw pitch, pulling catcher's head in with your glove hand and snap ball with your pitching arm extended like you are shaking the hand of the person in front of you. Finish with a relaxed arm and with your elbow pointed at the catcher (make sure to keep head over knee, and hip over heel). Release the ball at the 6 o'clock position.
5. Take 4 steps back set toes, head, and hip in proper position. Pitching arm and glove hand at 9 o'clock position on a clock (in front of toes) take your pitching hand upward watching the back of your hand through the 12 o'clock position.
6. Make a complete circle with arm, snapping the ball (releasing) at the 6 o'clock position. After you snap the ball, follow through the pitch. Pitching arm should be relaxed and extended like shaking hands. Elbow finishes pointed at catcher (glove hand again should be pulling catcher's head into your body during motion). Keep your head over back leg.
7. Special k:
Take 4 steps back (you should now be half way up on pitching mat) set toes, head, and hip, in proper position. Lift front leg off ground (until thigh is parallel with ground), flex back leg a little more, raise both arms (their body should now resemble a "k") pushing off back leg driving toward home plate, keeping head over back leg while dragging back toe into front heel, (pretending you have a beach ball in between your thighs and you want to break it). Front foot should land at 45 degree angle. Land heel then toe, driving your heel into the ground (you should have feeling of falling backwards); follow through pitch to target.
8. Flamingo:
Go back to pitching plate, facing home plate place front foot (same foot as pitching arm) on plate with front of plate going through arch of foot bend back leg having foot in air (should look like a flamingo) have arms at side, bend front knee - putting weight on thigh, rock body and drive to home plate, striding out (stride length should be 6 steps from front of pitching plate heel to toe, heel to toe, 6 times) landing heel, then toe, at 45 degree angle (again getting the feel of driving your heel into ground) dragging back foot, keeping head with back leg, while touching calf to calf (Again breaking the beach ball in between your thighs). Follow through pitch to target. Again you should get the feeling of falling backwards.
9. Three step walkup:
Take three steps behind pitching mat, walk up when front foot (pitching arm foot) hits pitching plate, (time it so front of plate goes through arch of foot) push off as hard as possible toward target, landing front foot on step off mark, driving heel into ground, upon landing heel then toe, land at 45 degree angle, keeping head with back leg, dragging back foot through the pitch (getting the feeling of breaking



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the beach ball) touching thigh to thigh. Follow through to target. (You should get the feeling of falling backwards).

Clock work hand position at stations:

- 1 & 2. Thumb on top, snap wrist, follow through.
3. Thumb on bottom, hand relaxed, snap wrist, follow through.
4. Thumb on outside, see back of hand, top and drop.

Be in control, stay relaxed, keep smooth circle

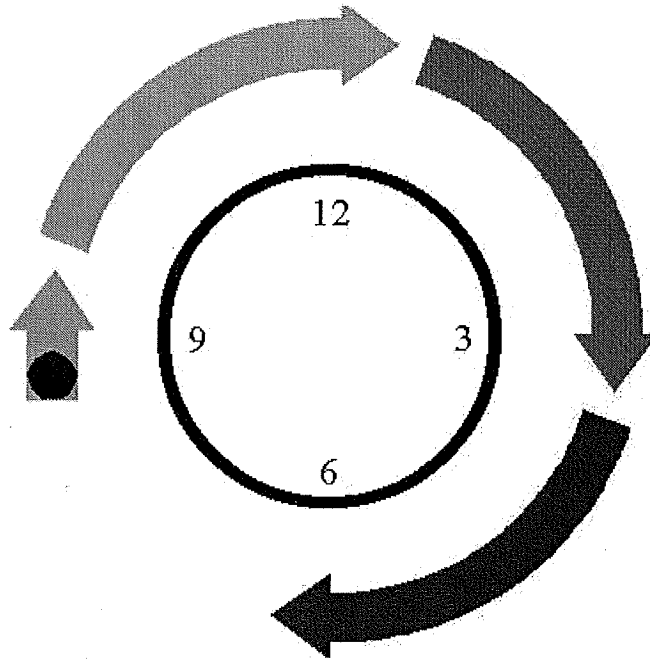
Open door in line with target

Find consistency, use self control

Keep head still, eyes on target, chest back, stand tall, open door(hips), release ball with strong snap, close door (hips)

Be aggressive when pitching; you control the game

At all stations they should throw at least ten pitches. Keep an eye on proper mechanics. Working with every pitch for that goal.





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Part 4 – Fielding

READY POSITION:

- Players need to get into a balanced athletic position before every pitch.
- Arms relaxed.
- Feet approx 1½ times wider than shoulder width.
- Toes pointing toward home plate.
- Weight on the balls of your feet.

INFIELDERS:

- All infielders need to "walk to", or "rock to" ready position (younger players should be in ready position during windup). This should be done just as their pitcher starts their motion. This will help them with their reaction time.
- Glove out front.
- Glove side foot slightly forward.

INFIELDERS FOOTWORK:

- Move toward the ball quickly, stay low, eyes stay on the ball at all times.
- Shuffle step right or left.
- Cross over step right or left.
- Lean in the direction of the ball.

INFIELDERS GLOVE POSITION:

- Glove should be out in front of the body forming a triangle from right foot to left foot, to player's glove.
- Glove should be no more than 6" above the ground.
- Fingers pointing down in front of glove.
- Throwing hand should be above glove "Alligator".
- Field the ball in front of the body whenever possible.
- Corner infielders, 1st & 3rd will be lower, and most times closer to the batter than middle infielders, SS & 2nd. The corner infielders never need to be closer to the batter than the pitcher.

OUTFIELDERS:

- All outfielders need to be in ready position. This should be done just as their pitcher starts their motion. This will help them with their reaction time.
- They will be in a relaxed athletic position.
- They will be more upright than the infielders.
- Both feet pointing toward home plate.

OUTFIELDERS FOOTWORK:

- Move toward the ball quickly, eyes stay on the ball at all times.
- First step on a fly ball is going back (drop step towards ball).
- Cross over step right or left.
- Lean in the direction of the ball.



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OUTFIELDERS GLOVE POSITION:

- Glove should be waist high.
- Fingers pointing down in front of glove. Catch or field the ball in front of the body whenever possible.

FIELDING DRILLS

READY POSITION -*FOR CORRECT STANCE ONLY:

HAVE ALL OF THE PLAYERS GET A PARTNER, 1 PLAYER WILL ROLL THE BALL TO THEIR PARTNER WHO WILL BE IN THE READY POSITION WITH THEIR GLOVE HAND BACK BEHIND THEIR GLOVE SIDE LEG. *THIS IS TO HELP THE PLAYERS UNDERSTAND WHERE THEIR BODY SHOULD BE WHEN PICKING UP A GROUND BALL ONLY.

INFIELD GROUND BALL DRILL SET:

SEPARATE PLAYERS INTO 2 GROUPS, HAVE 1 GROUP AT THE 3RD BASE POSITION, TAKE 1 PLAYER (OR COACH) FROM THIS GROUP AND HAVE THEM GO TO THE FIRST BASE LINE ABOUT HALF WAY UP THE LINE, THEY WILL ACT AS THE FIRST BASEMAN. HAVE THE SECOND GROUP GO TO THE 2ND BASE POSITION, TAKE 1 PLAYER (OR COACH) FROM THIS GROUP AND HAVE THEM GO TO THE FIRST BASE POSITION, THEY WILL ACT AS THE FIRST BASEMAN. HAVE THE COACH FOR THE GROUP AT 3RD BASE ABOUT 8-10' TOWARD HOME PLATE, AND THE COACH FOR THE 2ND BASE GROUP WILL BE ABOUT 8-10' IN FRONT OF THE GROUP AT 2ND BASE, (MAKE SURE THAT THIS COACH IS NOT IN THE THROWING LANE FOR THE GROUP AT 3RD BASE. THE COACH WILL ROLL A BALL TO THE FIRST PLAYER IN LINE, THE PLAYER FIELDS THE BALL, THROWS TO THE FIRST BASEMAN FOR THEIR GROUP, AND GOES TO THE END OF THEIR LINE. EACH PLAYER WILL FIELD A TOTAL OF 3 BALLS ROLLED TO THEM, THEN FOR THE NEXT SET THEY WILL GET 3 ONE HOP GROUND BALLS, THEN 3 GROUND BALLS 1 STEP TO THEIR LEFT, THEN 3 GROUND BALLS 1 STEP TO THEIR RIGHT, THEN 3 BACKHAND PICK UP GROUND BALLS. FOR BACKHAND PICK UPS HAVE THE PLAYERS START IN THE BACKHAND POSITION, THEN HAVE THE COACH THROW ONE HOP GROUND BALLS INTO THE PLAYERS GLOVE. * THESE THROWS FROM THE COACH SHOULD BE FROM APPROX 20-25' AWAY FROM THE FIELDER, WITH THE FIELDERS ALREADY IN THE BACKHAND POSITION, AND THESE THROWS SHOULD BE SHORT HOPS RIGHT INTO THE PLAYERS GLOVES TO HELP WITH CORRECT FOOTWORK, AND TO BUILD CONFIDENCE FIRST. HAVE THE PLAYERS FIELDING A BALL ON THEIR BACKHAND, MOVING THEIR GLOVE TOWARD HOME PLATE, NOT BACK, AND AWAY FROM HOME PLATE. HELP THEM WITH CORRECT FOOTWORK TO TRANSITION FROM FIELDING A BALL FROM THE BACKHAND POSITION, TO MAKING A THROW TO FIRST BASE. AS THE PLAYERS IMPROVE, ADD DISTANCE AND NUMBER OF HOPS WITH THE THROWS.

UP THE LADDER:

THIS IS A GOOD DRILL TO HELP PLAYERS BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE OR CONFIDENT IN THEMSELVES FOR CATCHING FLY BALLS. PUT ALL OF THE PLAYERS IN A LINE OR IN A COUPLE OF LINES, IF YOU HAVE MORE THEN I COACH AVAILABLE. HAVE THEM STAND ABOUT 5-6' APART, THE COACH WILL START AT ONE END OF THE LINE AND TOSS A BALL ABOUT 2-4' ABOVE THE FIRST PLAYER, THEN WORK HIS WAY DOWN THE LINE TO GIVE EACH PLAYER A CHANCE TO CATCH A BALL TOSSED AT ABOUT THE SAME HEIGHT. IF THE PLAYER DROPS THE TOSS THEY WOULD GET A LETTER. *THIS WOULD BE LIKE PLAYING A GAME OF HORSE IN BASKETBALL). THE COACH WOULD MAKE THE TOSSES A LITTLE HIGHER EACH TIME THEY WOULD GO THROUGH THE LINE.



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DROP STEP:

HAVE THE PLAYERS FORM A LINE IN FRONT OF 1 COACH; EACH WITH THEIR OWN BALL. THE FIRST PLAYER IN LINE WILL RUN TO THE COACH, HAND HIM THE BALL AND TAKE A DROP STEP RIGHT THEN RUN WITH BOTH ARMS PUMPING, THE COACH WILL THEN TOSS UP THE BALL TRYING TO LEAD THE PLAYER, SIMILAR TO A QUARTERBACK THROWING TO A RECEIVER. WHEN THE PLAYER GETS TO THE BALL THEY WILL REACH OUT TO MAKE THE CATCH, THEN THROW THE BALL BACK INTO THE COACH. CONTINUE TO HAVE EACH PLAYER MAKE 2-3 CATCHES WITH A DROP STEP TO THEIR RIGHT AND 2-3 CATCHES WITH A DROP STEP TO THEIR LEFT. *IF YOU HAVE MORE THEN 1 COACH, SPLIT THE TEAM UP BETWEEN EACH COACH TO GET IN MORE CHANCES FOR EACH PLAYER.

RELAY DRILL II:

HAVE SIX PLAYERS MAKE A BIG CIRCLE ON THE FIELD. START WITH ONE BALL, HAVING THE PLAYERS CATCH AND TURN MAKING THE RELAY TO THE NEXT PERSON. ROTATION SHOULD ALWAYS BE TO THE GLOVE SIDE OF THE PLAYER YOU ARE THROWING TO. ONCE THEY HAVE THE IDEA, ADD A SECOND BALL. HAVE TWO TEAMS COMPETE FOR WHO CAN KEEP THE RELAY GOING THE LONGEST.

CROSS OVER DRILL (OLDER AGES):

WITH THE PLAYER STATIONARY IN THE FIELDING POSITION, ROLL A BALL DIRECTLY AT THEM TO FIELD. AFTER FIELDING SEVERAL BALLS DIRECTLY AT THEM, HAVE THE PLAYER CROSS THEIR LEFT LEG OVER THEIR RIGHT, REACHING DOWN WITH THEIR GLOVE HAND (BACKHAND FOR A RIGHT HANDED THROWER); THE COACH ROLLS A BALL DIRECTLY INTO THEIR GLOVE TO GIVE THE PLAYER THE FEELING OF FIELDING A BACKHAND. PLAYER THEN RETURNS TO FIELDING POSITION AND THEN CROSSES THEIR RIGHT LEG OVER THEIR LEFT, REACHING DOWN WITH THEIR GLOVE HAND (FOREHAND FOR A RIGHT HANDED THROWER), THE COACH ROLLS A BALL DIRECTLY INTO THEIR GLOVE. ONCE THE FIELDER IS COMFORTABLE, THE COACH CAN START BOUNCING THE BALL DIRECTLY INTO THEIR GLOVE.

SHUFFLE DRILL:

PLACE TWO CONES AS FAR APART AS AGE APPROPRIATE TO CHALLENGE THE PLAYER. WITH THE COACH 10 YARDS AWAY FROM THE MIDDLE, THE COACH ROLLS THE BALL TO ONE SIDE HAVING THE PLAYER SHUFFLE (KEEPING HEAD DOWN AND BUTT DOWN) TO FIELD THE BALL. ONCE THE BALL IS FIELDER, THE PLAYER THROWS TO COACH WHO THEN ROLLS THE BALLS TOWARDS THE OPPOSITE CONE. PLAYER SHUFFLES BACK AND FORTH, FIELDING THE BALL EACH TIME.

CROSS OVER DRILL II (OLDER AGES):

ADD CONES VERY WIDE, ROLLING THE BALL, FORCING THE FIELDER TO FIELD A MOVING BALL USING A CROSS OVER STEP. SLOWLY EXPAND THE LENGTH OF EACH THROW UNTIL THE FIELDER CANNOT REACH THE ROLLING BALL.

CORNER TO CORNER:

START OUTFIELDERS ON THE LEFT FIELD LINE. HIT OR THROW BALLS UNTIL THE FIELDER GETS TO THE RIGHT FIELD LINE. THIS WILL GET THE FIELDER USED TO RUNNING FOR A BALL TO CATCH IT. DEPENDING ON THE AGE OF THE PLAYER, EACH OUTFIELDER SHOULD CATCH BETWEEN FIVE (5) TO SEVEN (7) FLY BALLS WHILE RUNNING FROM THE LEFT FIELD LINE TO THE RIGHT FIELD LINE.

CORNER TO CORNER II:

SAME AS ABOVE BUT MIX IN FLY BALLS AND GROUND BALLS INTO THE OUTFIELDERS ATTEMPTS.



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Part 5 – Throwing

GRIP:

- Always try to locate fingers across the seams of ball.
- Find the seam "C".
- For younger players they may need to have 3 or 4 fingers across the seams of the ball. The older players should try to throw with 2 fingers across the seams.
- Leave a small air space between your palm and the ball.

THROWING:

- "Shak Position" — this is how you can explain the position of the shoulder, hip, ankle, and knee should be aimed at your target.
- Glove shoulder at target.
- Knees slightly bent.
- Inside of back ankle is facing target.
- Tips of toes are making a straight line to your target.

SEPARATION:

Take the ball from your glove with your throwing hand. The throwing hand comes back and then up to slightly above the players head and the ball should be facing away from the target.

- Fingers on top of the ball.
- Weight on back leg.
- Elbow or glove pointing at target.

THROW:

- The throw starts with the front foot step.
- The glove pulls back to the chest or to the side or the chest.
- Head facing target.
- Elbow above shoulder.
- Hips rotate.

FOLLOW THROUGH:

- The head continues to face the target.
- Weight transfers forward.
- Throwing arm relaxes as it comes across body. Back leg releases and comes forward also.



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THROWING DRILLS

TOWEL DRILL:

HAVE 1 PLAYER HOLD A (HAND SIZED) TOWEL IN THEIR THROWING HAND, GRIP ONE END OF THE TOWEL, AND MOVE TO A GOOD THROWING POSITION. THE TOWEL SHOULD BE SLIGHTLY ABOVE THE PLAYERS HEAD, AND THE BACK OF THE PLAYERS HAND SHOULD BE FACING THE TARGET. HAVE A COACH IN FRONT OF THE PLAYER (ABOUT 4-5' FOR YOUNGER PLAYERS AND ABOUT 5-6' FOR OLDER PLAYERS). THE COACH WILL THEN MOVE 1-2 STEPS TO THE SIDE AND HOLD OUT THEIR GLOVE FOR A TARGET. THE PLAYER STARTS THEIR THROWING MOTION AND THEY WILL SLAP THE COACHES MITT WITH THE TOWEL. HAVE EACH PLAYER DO THIS FOR 10-12 REPS. AS THE PLAYERS GET COMFORTABLE WITH THIS DRILL HAVE THEM PAIR OFF WITH A TEAMMATE.

1 KNEE DRILL:

THROWING FROM ONE KNEE, (READY-SET-THROW). DO THIS DRILL IN GROUPS OF THREE, 1-THROWING, 1-CATCHING AT THE OPPOSITE SIDE, AND 1-CATCHING NEXT TO THE GIRL THROWING. TEN THROW'S EACH FROM APPROX 20' (10'), THEN 30' (20'), THEN 40' (30'). (THIS DRILL IS TO WORK ON CORRECT FORM AND TECHNIQUE, NOT FOR SPEED).

GRIP DRILL:

DEMONSTRATE THE CORRECT GRIP TO ALL OF YOUR PLAYERS. HAVE THE COACHES TAKE A BALL AND TOSS IT TO THE PLAYER, SEE HOW QUICKLY THEY CAN **TAKE** THE BALL FROM THEIR MITT AND FIND THE CORRECT GRIP. SEE IF THEY CAN FIND THE CORRECT GRIP WITHOUT LOOKING. WORK ON THIS UNTIL THEY CAN DO THIS WITHOUT EVEN HAVING TO THINK ABOUT IT.

GRIP DRILL II:

HOLD GLOVE HAND IN FRONT WITH BALL, THROWING HAND BEHIND. PLAYER TRANSFERS BALL BEHIND BACK. PLAYER FINDS CORRECT GRIP POSITION AND PRESENTS BALL IN FRONT. IMPROVE QUICKNESS.

FOUR CORNERS:

START WITH THE SAME NUMBER OF PLAYERS AT EACH BASE. BEGIN WITH THE BALL AT HOME PLATE, THE PLAYER AT HOME THROWS TO 3RD, THEN RUNS TO 3RD AND GETS BEHIND THE LAST PLAYER AT 3RD BASE, THE PLAYER AT 3RD THROWS TO 2ND, THEN RUNS TO SECOND AND GETS BEHIND THE LAST PLAYER AT 2ND BASE, THEN IT CONTINUES TO FIRST, THEN TO HOME. CONTINUE THE DRILL UNTIL THE PLAYER THAT STARTED THE DRILL AT HOME GETS ALL THE WAY AROUND THE BASES THROWING AND RETURNS TO HOME. *YOU CAN ALSO DO THIS SAME DRILL IN REVERSE. *YOU CAN ADD FOOTWORK FOR TOUCHING THE BASE THEN THROWING FOR THE CLOCKWISE DRILL. *YOU CAN ADD FOOTWORK, AND HOW TO MAKE A TAG. ADVANCED TEAMS CAN USE TWO BALLS. MAKE SURE THE PLAYER THROWING HAS EYE CONTACT WITH THE PLAYER CATCHING.

RELAY DRILL I:

HAVE THE PLAYERS DIVIDED INTO GROUPS OF 3-4. HAVE EACH GROUP MAKE UP A STRAIGHT LINE WITH EACH PLAYER IN THE LINE ABOUT 60' APART. *(CHANGE THIS DISTANCE BY PLAYER AGE AS NECESSARY). START WITH THE BALL AT ONE END OF THE LINE, THE PLAYERS WILL THROW THE BALL TO THE NEXT PLAYER IN THE LINE WORKING ON MAKING A GOOD THROW TO THE PLAYERS GLOVE SIDE AND THEN THE NEXT PLAYER DOES THE SAME THING UNTIL THE BALL GETS TO THE OTHER END OF THE LINE. THEN CONTINUE BY THROWING THE BALL TO EACH PLAYER GOING BACK TO WHERE THEY STARTED. *HAVE THE COACH GET ALL OF THE LINES STARTED AT THE SAME TIME TO SEE WHICH LINE OF PLAYERS FINISHES FIRST. IF A PLAYER MISSES THE BALL DURING THE DRILL, MAKE



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SURE THAT YOU HAVE THEM RUN AFTER THE BALL TO CONTINUE THE DRILL. THIS WILL HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS THE SAME THING THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO DO IN A GAME, IF THE BALL GOT AWAY FROM THEM OR ONE OF THEIR TEAMMATES.

BUCKET DRILL:

START BY PLACING A GARBAGE CAN (BALL BAG, BUCKET, ETC) AT HOME PLATE. HAVE ALL PLAYERS IN THE OUTFIELD IN 2 LINES, ONE LINE IN LEFT CENTER AND ONE LINE IN RIGHT CENTER. HAVE ONE COACH TOSSING UP FLY BALLS FOR EACH GROUP. HAVE THE PLAYERS MAKE THE CATCH CORRECTLY THEN MAKE A THROW INTO THE GARBAGE CAN.

*EACH PLAYER WOULD MAKE A THROW THEN GO TO THE BACK OF THE LINE, HAVE EACH PLAYER MAKE 3 THROWS FROM EACH LOCATION.

*FOR THE YOUNGER PLAYERS START THIS DRILL FROM THE INFIELD, ADJUST FOR EACH AGE LEVEL.

TIMED THROWING:

SET UP 2 LINES OF PLAYERS, A LINE AT 3RD BASE AND A LINE AT 1ST BASE. USING A BALL HAVE THE FIRST PLAYER IN LINE AT 1st BASE MAKE A THROW TO THE FIRST PLAYER IN LINE AT 3RD BASE. HAVE THE NEXT PLAYER IN LINE AT EACH BASE WORK AS THE BACK UP IN CASE OF AN ERRANT THROW. AFTER EACH PLAYER MAKES A THROW THEY WILL RUN ACROSS THE INFIELD TO FOLLOW THEIR THROW. *MAKE SURE THAT THE PLAYERS RUN OFF TO THE RIGHT OF THE THROWING LANE SO THEY ARE NOT IN THE PATH OF THE NEXT THROW. ONCE THEY UNDERSTAND THE DRILL, TIME THE PLAYERS TO SEE HOW MANY THROWS THEY CAN MAKE AS A TEAM IN 60 SECONDS. HAVE THE ENTIRE TEAM YELL OUT TO COUNT EVERY THROW. *FOR THE YOUNGER PLAYERS YOU MAY WANT TO SHORTEN THE THROWING DISTANCE. *EMPHASIS ON THROWING ACCURACY, CORRECT THROWING MOTION, QUICKNESS FOR RECEIVING AND TRANSFER TO THROWING, GIVING A GOOD THROWING TARGET, CATCHING WITH 2 HANDS, MOVING TO THE BALL, BACKING UP YOUR TEAMMATE, TEAM COMMUNICATION.

THROWING IN FRONT OF RUNNER:

THREE OUTFIELDERS LAY DOWN ON THEIR BACKS WITH THEIR HEAD FACING HOME PLATE. THREE BALLS ARE PLACED ON THE GROUND IN FRONT OF EACH OUTFIELDER. ONE RUNNER BEGINS RUNNING THE BASES ON THE COACHES HAND SIGNAL. AS THE RUNNER ROUNDS THE BASES, THE COACH CALLS OUT ONE OF THE OUTFIELD POSITIONS. FIELDER MUST GET TO THEIR FEET QUICKLY, SEE THE RUNNERS POSITION, AND MAKE THE THROW TO THE BASE THE RUNNER IS HEADED TO. EMPHASIZE THE OUTFIELDERS TO ALWAYS THROW IN FRONT OF THE RUNNER.

GENERAL IN THE MIDDLE:

ONE PLAYER STANDS AT EACH BASE WITH THE FOCUS PLAYER STANDING ON THE PITCHER'S RUBBER. WITH YOUNGER PLAYERS YOU CAN MOVE ALL THE PLAYERS IN CLOSER TO THE PITCHER'S RUBBER. THE PLAYER, AT HOME, THROWS THE BALL TO THE FOCUS PLAYER ON THE PITCHERS RUBBER AND CALLS OUT WHAT BASE TO THROW TO. THE FOCUS PLAYER THEN TURNS AND THROWS TO THAT BASE. ONCE THAT PLAYER CATCHES THE BALL, THAT BASE BECOMES THE "NEW" HOME. THIS PLAYER THEN THROWS TO THE FOCUS PLAYER AND CALLS OUT A DIFFERENT BASE. THIS CONTINUES UNTIL THE COACH STOPS THE DRILL. EVERY TIME A BASE THROWS TO THE FOCUS PLAYER, THIS BASE SHALL BE CONSIDERED HOME BASE.



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Part 6 – PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

Pre-Game (items 1~8)

Pre-Practice Warm Up (items 1-4 only)

- 1) 200-400 Meter run with gloves. *Just find something in the park for the players to run to, a tree, a light poll, or an outfield fence.
- 2) Stretch
 - Lower body
 - Torso
 - Upper body
- 3) 20-40-60 (10-20-30*) feet throwing, 10-15 throw's per player at each distance, then after you get to 60' (30'*), play the throwing game.
- 4) Throwing Game- 10 good throws each, after the last throw the partners run to the center and slap mitt's, the first pair into the middle wins, then rotate partners and repeat 2 more times.
- 5) Hitting- depending on the room you have at the field, you would determine if you can use practice balls or whiffle balls for hitting drills.
 - Soft toss- 2 coaches throw soft toss, catchers and pitchers would hit first and then rotate in 2 players at a time. *After the pitchers and catchers hit first they would then go to start their pitching warm ups.
 - All other players field for the 2 hitters, rotate all players through soft toss.
- 6) Pitchers and catchers warm up (with one coach to watch). Also warm up all of your potential pitchers and catchers. If you have an additional coach or parent, warm up two pitchers at this time.
- 7) Fly Balls- work in cut off's, throws to the infield and to home plate. Hit fly balls, line drive, ground balls.
- 8) Infield drills (along dug out fence line).
 - Soft grounders short distance.
 - Soft grounders long distance.
 - Hard grounders long distance.
 - Bunts rolling, glove pick up (where applicable).
 - Bunts slow rolling, bare hand pick up (where applicable).

***Depending on the age level and time issues you will need to adjust the time and distances you spend on each of these warm up sections**



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General Practice Plan

(3-4 coaches present)

Goal: To teach fundamentals of baseball/softball and to keep all players active throughout the practice time.

The best practices are the ones that are planned and prepared ahead of time.

A. Warm-up (5 minutes):

- Light jog (100 yards).
- Jumping jacks (20).
- Arm swings (10 forward, 10 backward).
- Arm stretches (both arms).

B. Pair up players in groups of 2 to play catch. (10 minutes).

- Half of players in one line with remainder 10-15 feet apart to start throwing.
- Stress proper form on all throws including pivoting after all catches to start to transfer to throwing motion.
- Stress proper receiving position (2 hands up) and transition from receiving to throwing.
- As players get loose, gradually increase distance to 20 feet.
- After all players are warmed up, play a quick game of catch (5 throws per partner). Repeat this drill 2-3 times and rotate partners each time. As the season progresses, stress the importance of speed as well as technique with the older players.

C. Divide team into three (3) groups or stations (30-45 minutes):

a. Hitting (1 -2 coaches).

1. Stress fundamentals of hitting (Stance, stride, swing, contact location, and finish).
2. Have each player (all ages) take at least 10 swings from a tee each practice.
3. Soft toss with whiffle balls/baseballs/softballs stressing proper technique (palm up (right hand), palm down (left hand) at contact, (for a right handed hitter). Whiffle balls also work well when space is a factor. This drill also helps with bat speed.
4. As players get older, it is good to use whiffle balls of different sizes (softball/baseball/golf ball) to work with hand-eye coordination.
5. Soft toss with baseball/softball/golfball size whiffle balls and a hitting stick (5/8" doll rod approximately 32-34" long) to work on speed and strength.
6. For older players, a station for bunting can be introduced. Pivot bunting is easiest to learn.

b. Infield (1 coach)

1. Stress fielding position (low to the ground, knees bent, and hands out in front). Also stress the importance of fielding the ball in the middle of the body as opposed to on the side of the body.
2. Coach alternates hitting groundballs to each player. Hit at player, to left and right of player. Older players should also learn backhand plays. Hit slow grounders at times to force players to charge the ball.
3. One player is first baseman or receiver.
4. Alternate players so that each gets to play first base and get ground balls from different angles of the field.
5. Work on feet positioning for the first baseman. Throw right-handed; right foot is contact foot at 1B. Throw left-handed, left foot is contact foot. Work on player getting from fielding position to first base on each ground ball.

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- c. Outfield (1 coach)
1. This station can also be used as an extension of playing catch for the younger players to further stress the importance of proper throwing mechanics.
 2. Coach should hit fly balls to players. Have one player act as cut-off person halfway between outfielder and coach. This helps with the accuracy of the throws and initiates the concept of the cut-off person.
 3. For younger players, the fly balls should be thrown to the outfielders instead of being hit to them. This allows the coach to work in the fly ball concept slowly. Too many younger players are afraid of a fly ball hit from a bat as opposed to a throw.
 4. A variation is to have two (2) outfielders at a time about 20 feet apart. The coach can throw/hit a fly ball in the middle and teach the players how to communicate with each other.
 5. Another good drill is the "quarterback" drill where the player lines up near the coach. When the coach says "go," the player runs forward and the coach leads them with a short toss. The distance of the toss can vary based upon the age of the player.
- d. Pitching/Catching (when player pitch begins).
1. A station to add when player pitch begins is to have one coach spend time with the pitchers to work on the proper throwing technique.
 2. If possible, it would be advantageous to work with catchers when time is available.
 3. As players get older, the catchers should be able to catch the pitchers at each practice.
- D. Live Game Drill (20 – 30 minutes).
1. With players still in three (3) groups, play a game where each group gets to bat against coach pitching with other two (2) groups playing defense positions.
 2. Alternate positions so that each player gets to play 3-4 positions during the game.
 3. This game can be played with different variations:
 - i. Play as a real game where each batter runs out each hit. Each team gets 3 outs before the groups are rotated. Each team will keep track of runs scored.
 - ii. Play where each batter gets 3-4 swings and runs out the fifth. The defense will play out all hits as if it were a game situation.
 - iii. Option I keeps all of the players in the game.
 - iv. One coach should work with the batters, one coach will pitch and one coach should work with the fielders.
 - v. In this game, it is important that all fielders are moving on each hit (whether to make a play or to back-up a play).
 - vi. This is a good drill to teach players movement on each hit and to keep them mentally in the game.
- E. Always finish practice with base running.
1. With a coach at first base and third base, have players first run from home to 1st. If the ball is in the infield, the player must learn to listen to the coach telling them to "run through" the base until they reach the grass.
 2. Teach the players how to "take the turn" on a hit into the outfield.
 3. Have the players run from home to 2nd base, and how to watch the



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- coach at 3rd when they are half way to 2nd base if no play at 2nd base.
4. Have players run around the bases and stress the importance of touching the inside corner of the base to shorten the distance.
 5. A variation is to create different relay races to make the drill fun and work on player speed.
 - Half of team at 1st base and half at 3rd base. Can runner going from 1B to 2B beat runner from 3rd base to home.
 - Half of team at first base and half at 3rd base. Can runner going from 1B to 3B beat runner from 3rd base to 1B.
 - Half of team at 1st base and half at home plate. Can runner going from 1B to home beat runner from home to 3rd base.

Notes:

A practice schedule can be altered to spend half of the practice on hitting where each coach takes a different hitting station. For example, one coach works on tee hitting, one coach works on soft toss, one works with the hitting stick, etc. All can be done with a bucket of whiffle balls.

Different variations of the schedule detailed above can be used. It is important to always stress fundamentals and to keep players as involved as possible so that none are lost in the learning process. The younger the player, the more important the job of keeping the player involved at all times.

If coaches are not all available at practices, always ask parents to help out. Coaching baseball/softball is more than a one or two person job especially at the younger levels. Make sure to explain to the parents what their function is and what to look for.